

Deuteronomy Discussion Questions Taken from *'One Nation Under God'*, by George Athas

Deuteronomy 1:1-46

1. Moses sets a precedent for Jesus in many ways. Compare the following passages and think about the ways Matthew presents Jesus as the New Moses:
 - a. Exodus 1:15-2:10 and Matthew 2:13-18
 - b. Exodus 2 and Matthew 2:14-15
 - c. Deuteronomy 1:3 and Matthew 4:1-2
 - d. Exodus 19:3-8 and Matthew 5-7
2. Do the songs we sing during our church services, or the liturgies we use, reflect the notion of being spiritually present with Christ?
3. Where in society can we observe the notion that good acts can make up for past wrongs? How might Christians speak effectively to counter this?

Deuteronomy 2:1-3:29

1. The Bible is sometimes summarised as the story of God's people under God's rule in God's place. How do we see this in the Old Testament and the New Testament?
2. What do people associate with the term 'Holy Land'? How should Christians think about such a notion today?
3. Can there be such a thing as a 'Christian country'?

Deuteronomy 4:1-43

1. For the Christian, how does the past inform the future?
2. How should Christians think about religious images like crosses, statues, icons and other religious art?
3. What does it mean to have fellowship with God (1 Corinthians 6:17, Philippians 2:1-11) and participate in his divine nature (2 Peter 1:4)

Deuteronomy 4:44-5:15

1. Look up the following passages and consider how Israel's attitude was 'unconstitutional' and breached the law:
 - a. Matthew 11:28-12:8
 - b. Matthew 12:9-14
 - c. Mark 12:38-44
2. People sometimes make statements that begin with the phrase, 'I like to think of God as...' How might people finish this sentence? What is a suitable Christian response to such statements?
3. The Ten Commandments are often read in church services today, or displayed prominently on the walls in church buildings. What are the pros and cons of such practices?
4. Should Christians today demand the public commemoration of biblical events, such as Easter and Christmas?
5. Is the concept of the 'weekend' in line with Christian thoughts? What should Christians make of the move in recent years towards seven-day trading?

Deuteronomy 5:16-33

1. Consider the following points from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. How do his words demonstrate the intention of the law?
 - a. Matthew 5:21-26
 - b. Matthew 5:27-30
 - c. Matthew 5:33-37
 - d. Matthew 5:43-48
2. Some Christian liturgies recite the Ten Points and ask God to write them on their hearts. How would you evaluate this practice?
3. Should Christians seek to impose the love of neighbour onto a democratic society?
4. What does it mean to promote the dignity and preservation of human life? What situations can you think of in which this principle becomes challenging?
5. Is the principle of 'innocent until proven guilty' endorsed by the Ten Points?
6. What might be a Christian response to the death penalty in modern societies?

Deuteronomy 6:1-25

1. How does Deuteronomy 6:4 and its fulfilment in the gospel of Jesus Christ affect how Christians should view:
 - a. Different Christian denominations?
 - b. The claim that Allah of Islam is the same as the God of the Bible?
 - c. The claim that Christians and Jews worship the same God?
2. The creed in Deuteronomy 6:21-25 implies that all Israelites were spiritually present at the Exodus. Consider how the following verses reshape the concept of being 'spiritually present' for the Christian:
 - a. Romans 6:1-6
 - b. Romans 7:4-6
 - c. 1 Corinthians 10:16-17
 - d. Galatians 2:19-20
 - e. Ephesians 2:4-7
3. How do the following passages address the issue of 'novel obedience' and the gospel?
 - a. Mark 4:1-20
 - b. Mark 8:34-38
4. How might Deuteronomy 6:4-9 inform Christian leaders putting together a church service?

Deuteronomy 7:1-11:32

1. Should we expect God to have acted with more modern sensibilities towards the Canaanites?
2. How should Christians respond to the claim that the God of the Old Testament is hateful, while the God of the New Testament is loving?
3. How are modern nations similar or different to the people of Israel? How should this affect foreign and military policy?
4. How does the supremacy of Christ shape a Christian's attitude to secular authorities?
5. How should the sacred ban inform Christian participation in evangelism? In ethical endeavours and campaigns?
6. In which aspects of life is it easy to look only at the immediate and the visible? How might Christians respond to this?

Deuteronomy 12:1-32

1. Which of the Ten Points provides a rationale for the mandates in Deuteronomy 12?
2. How do the following texts help to shape a Christian understanding of Deuteronomy 12?
 - a. Galatians 3:19-29
 - b. Ephesians 4:1-16
 - c. Revelation 7:4-10
3. Discuss how a Christian understanding of Deuteronomy 12 shapes the way Christians think about:
 - a. Church property and architecture
 - b. Visiting the 'Holy Land'
 - c. Conflict between the state of Israel and its Arab neighbours
 - d. Rebuilding a temple in Jerusalem
 - e. Christian denominations
 - f. Different styles of 'doing church' (e.g. formal liturgy; free form)
4. The *Thirty Nine Articles of Religion* form a set of governing principles among Anglican churches. Read Article 34 below (note: it uses archaic language). How does a Christian understand of Deuteronomy 12 help to evaluate the rationale of this article?

It is not necessary that Traditions and Ceremonies be in all places one, or utterly like; for at all times they have been diverse, and may be changed according to the diversity of countries, times, and men's manners, so that nothing be ordained against God's Word. Whosoever, through his private judgement, willingly and purposely, doth openly break the Traditions and Ceremonies of the Church, which be not repugnant to the Word of God, and be ordained and approved by common authority, ought to be rebuked openly, (that others may fear to do the like,) as he that offendeth against the common order of the Church, and hurteth the authority of the Magistrate, and woundeth the consciences of the weak brethren. Every particular or national Church hath authority to ordain, change, and abolish, Ceremonies or Rites of the Church ordained only by man's authority, so that all things be done to edifying.

Deuteronomy 13:1-16:17

1. What kinds of challenges do new Christians today face from their family and society in various parts of the world? How might other Christians help them?
2. Consider how Deuteronomy helps Christians today to think about:
 - a. Wealth
 - b. Poverty
 - c. Charitable organisations
 - d. Capitalism
 - e. Government welfare
 - f. Government budgets
3. What attitude should Christians have towards the dietary customs of other faiths?
4. Some today make the following argument: 'The Law of Moses forbade the consumption of prawns, but now Christians eat prawns. The law also forbade homosexuality, but many Christians still object to homosexuality. This is a complete contradiction and double standard.' Is this a fair argument? How might a Christians respond in an informed way to this argument?
5. What does holiness look like for Christians today?

Deuteronomy 16:18-18:22

1. Consider the following verses and what they have to say about the kingship of Jesus:
 - a. Luke 1:31-33
 - b. John 12:12-16
 - c. John 18:33-38
 - d. John 19:12-22
 - e. Matthew 28:16-20
 - f. Colossians 1:12-20
 - g. Revelation 1:5-6
2. How does Deuteronomy 16:18-18:22 inform us about good leadership?
3. Read Matthew 23. From Jesus' words, what may we determine as good leadership qualities within the people of God? Do any of these qualities transfer to secular leadership?
4. Many modern concepts of government and justice can be traced back to the Bible. Which ideas and principles can you see in Deuteronomy 16:18-18:22?

Deuteronomy 19:1-21:23

1. What principles of justice in our modern societies can we trace back to Deuteronomy 19-21?
2. What principles might we gather from Deuteronomy 21:10-14 for how our modern societies should treat displaced persons?
3. In Matthew 5:38-42, does Jesus change or abolish the law of retaliation? How do his words impact our modern judicial practices? Consider the following passages to help you derive your answer:
 - a. Matthew 5:17-20
 - b. Galatians 3:21-26
 - c. Galatians 5:13-14

In his 1958 book, *Stride Toward Freedom: The Montgomery Story*, Martin Luther King, Jr wrote the following:

Violence as a way of achieving racial justice is both impractical and immoral. It is impractical because it is a descending spiral ending in destruction for all. The old law of an eye for an eye leaves everybody blind. It is immoral because it seeks to humiliate the opponent rather than win his understanding; it seeks to annihilate rather than to convert. Violence is immoral because it thrives on hatred rather than love. It destroys community and makes brotherhood impossible. It leaves society in monologue rather than dialogue. Violence ends by defeating itself. It creates bitterness in the survivors and brutality in the destroyers.

Considering the deeper intent of the law and Jesus' discussions in the Sermon on the Mount, how might we evaluate King's statement? What is right in what he says, and what is wrong? Why? How could we improve on his statement?

Deuteronomy 22:1-26:19

1. Consider the following passages and discuss what they have to say about the law
 - a. Matthew 5:17-20
 - b. Romans 7:1-25
 - c. Galatians 3:21-25
 - d. Galatians 5:13-14
2. Read the following verses and consider how they make use of Deuteronomy 25:4. What principles may we legitimately derive from their logic for Christian ministers today?
 - a. Luke 10:7
 - b. 1 Corinthians 9:1-19
 - c. 1 Timothy 5:17-18
3. In light of the issues raised in this chapter, evaluate the following practices in your own society or culture:
 - a. Treatment of refugees/asylum seekers (cf. Deuteronomy 23:15-16)
 - b. Minimum wage levels for employees (cf. Deuteronomy 24:6-22)
 - c. Workplace safety (cf. Deuteronomy 22:8)
 - d. Multinational corporations that move their centres of production to developing countries (cf. Deuteronomy 24:14-15)
 - e. Social security benefits for people with a disability; military veterans (cf. Deuteronomy 24:17-22; 25:4)
 - f. Assisted living for the elderly (cf. Deuteronomy 24:17-22; 25:4)
 - g. Austerity measures for the recovery of foreign debt (cf. Deuteronomy 24:6)
 - h. Justice and services for victims of sexual abuse (cf. Deuteronomy 22:22-29)
 - i. Attempts to protect endangered species (cf. Deuteronomy 22:6-7)
4. Deuteronomy 22:5 implies there should be no boundary between a person's external and internal identity. How should this inform our attitude to:
 - a. Transvestites and transgender people?
 - b. People who suffer from schizophrenia or multiple personality disorder?
5. The paternity of children was an important consideration in the sexual ethics of Israelite society. Do today's methods of contraception allow for a relaxation of these ethics for a modern society? Does the ability to test paternity genetically affect these ethics? Why or why not?

Deuteronomy 27:1-34:12

1. Read the following passages and think about how Jesus affects the status of the law
 - a. Matthew 5:17-20
 - b. Romans 7:1-25
 - c. Galatians 4:1-7
2. Does God relate to the Church today the same way he related to Israel through the law? Why or why not?
3. Read the following passages and consider how they critique the notion that the Church is the New Israel
 - a. Matthew 28:16-20
 - b. Acts 15:1-29
 - c. Ephesians 2:11-22
 - d. Revelation 7:1019
4. How should Christians respond to the claims of Islam and Mormonism that a new Prophet has arisen after Jesus with a divine revelation?